

## **The Haunted Rail Road**

I live in a rural area about 75 miles outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. There is nothing around other than a few very small towns and mostly farms near where I live.

This story takes place 11 years ago when I was in my sophomore year of high school. On the last day of school we were set to take a field trip to Kennywood amusement park which is just right outside of Pittsburgh. Sadly we never made it. We had just got on the turnpike to begin our journey when it started to rain. The driver and chaperones were talking about turning around and canceling the trip since most likely the park was going to be shut down for the day. While they were conversing I was tired and bored so I had my head laid against the window of the bus. I was trying to go to sleep but there were just too many other kids that were overly excited about the upcoming day of fun. All of the sudden I heard a deafening sound like that of a bomb going off and all I could see was a huge bright light. A few moments later I felt an intense pain on my face as if I had been stuck by a baseball bat. When I finally regained my vision I looked down and saw that my glasses had been shattered and everyone on the bus was screaming and crying. Shortly after it came to my attention that we had collided with a large rigged truck that had lost control from the excessive rain water on the road.

Myself and a few other kids were injured but nothing too serious. Apparently my head had bounced off the window when the impact occurred. Luckily my glasses took the brunt of the damage.

Several hours later we had all been transported to the nearest hospital to be checked out. We were soon released and later that evening we all arrived back at the school where things began. Every child was picked up by their worried parents except for myself and my best friend Tim. Apparently he had told his mom that my parents would be giving both of us a ride home and like a moron I had told my parents that his mom would be giving us a ride instead.

Several of the chaperones helped us try to contact both of our parents but we could not reach them. Since their vehicles were completely filled they could not give us a ride home. They offered to come back and pick us up after they dropped off the other kids but since it would take a while we declined. We decided to walk to my house since it was only four miles away. We figured once we got there that my parents would arrive shortly and that they could give Tim a ride to his house.

My face was deeply throbbing with pain and I could barely see anything in front of me due to my glasses being broke. It was starting to get dark out and we had been walking for about 40 minutes so we decided to stop and have a smoke break. We chatted for a while and then we continued on our journey. Twenty minutes later, the shape of my house was present off in the distance but only the porch light was on. We finally got there only to find out that my parents were not home. The house was tightly secure and I did not have a key to get inside. So Tim and I sat on the porch and decided to have another smoke break, while we watchfully kept an eye on the road for my parents to be traveling on at any moment. An hour had passed since we had arrived and it was getting close to being 10 pm.

Tim presented the idea to just walk the rest of the way to his house but I refused. I told him it was over 10 miles from my place and it would not be safe to walk to at this time of night. He then suggested that he would do so by walking on the local rail road tracks in which would cut the walk time in half since they ran directly by his house. He said that his decision wasn't open for discussion so he would go with or without my consent. Like a good friend I agreed but only under the condition that I would go with him. Traveling in a set of two would be much safer in the event of encountering a crazy farmer or a vicious animal looking for a meal.

So we walked out through the field and then through a light clearing of woods to reach the railroad tracks. By the time we got to the tracks everything was completely dark. Not even the moon was out. The only guiding marker we had left was the tracks

themselves. We walked on for just over an hour until we stopped when Tim thought he had heard something. I told him of course you heard something! We are in the middle of the woods on an old set of railroad tracks in the late hours of the night! Really do you expect not to hear things? He agreed and we continued until suddenly I heard a THUMP! I stopped dead in my tracks and tried to look around but yet I could see absolutely nothing. I shrugged it off and said it had to be just a falling tree or a loose rock that had fallen somewhere. Tim then suggested that we turn around go back to my place. I said there is no way! We are pretty much at equal distance from your house as you are from mine so it only makes logical sense to continue on to yours. Another 20 minutes went by and all seemed well until we both heard the same thump noise again. This time it seemed a heck of a lot closer. He asked me what were the odds of yet another tree falling near us? I laughed and said "not good." We were both somewhat frightened at this point and so we began to run. This had to be the dumbest thing I have ever done. Running on uneven tracks in the middle of the night with an endless amount of small unseen obstacles in our paths, it was inevitable that one of us would end up tripping over something. And soon enough I did. I had tripped over a large rail road spike protruding out of the ground. I landed on both knees and both hands. I began to howl with pain. Tim stopped and tried to help me up but it was almost impossible for me to walk. He said that he would continue on and get help. I was not fond of the idea but there really was no other choice.

Just as he began to leave the tracks began to rumble. Obviously I assumed that there was a train on its way. Sure enough a few moments later I heard the sound of a train whistle off in the distance. Tim helped me move to the side off the tracks and we sat and waited for it to go by. As it approached the tracks rumbled harder then before and the sound of the whistle was blasting our ears. The light that was on the front of the engine was bright and it illuminated the tracks in front of us from almost 100 yards away. We looked downward to see if we could begin to see our eventual destination but sadly all there was was dense woods and now fog to make matters worse. I counted 67 cargo units as it passed by. After it had left I felt a pit in my gut, as if hope of making our

destination that night was starting to wane. Tim began to move out and I tried to track him through the darkness but I lost sight of him rather quickly. I laid my back against a tree and thought it might be a sound idea to try to rest while waiting on Tim to return. I then briefly nodded off.

THUMP!!! I awoke. I looked around and called out to see if anyone was there. There was no reply. Thump..thump..thump..thump. The sound was getting closer and closer and I called out one more time if anyone was there? The noise had stopped but I was still rattled. I knew I could not drift back to sleep even if I wanted to. I looked at my watch and the time was 2:16. Tim had left around 1:45 so it had only been about a half hour since he has been gone. I kept staring at my watch, 2:17, 2:18, 2:19 and finally 2:20. Each passing minute felt like a life time but I knew I had to keep my spirits up and I kept telling myself that help would be here for me any minute. Just as I began to some what relax once again, I heard a different noise. At first I could not make out what it was but soon it started to sound more and more like a Sloooooop, sloooooooooop, slush, Sloooooop. My mind really began racing. What could that sound possibly be? I then began to smell something god awful. It smelled like a dead animal that has been rotting in the sun for weeks. Sloop, sloooooooooop. Sloooooooooop. I now recognized the sound. It sounded like a large piece of meat that was being dragged across the tracks. I began to crawl away from the sound inch by inch. I was hoping that whatever it was would just go away. It only got closer. 100 yards, 90 yard, 80 yards, 70 yards, I squinted and strained my eyes with every ounce of my being to see if I could see anything. I reached into my pocket and pulled out my book of matches. I tried to light them but they were too damp from me lying on the ground. I looked once more down the tracks and nothing could have ever prepared me for what I saw. There was a tall silhouetted figure slowing walking down the tracks. It appeared to be dragging something behind it. Slooop sloooooop the noise continued! I have never felt true fear before this night. A million thoughts coursed through my head all at once. The number one thought was oh my god I am going to die. This thing is going to cut me up and drag me down the tracks! I eventually screamed out, "Leave me alone, I have done nothing

wrong! Please just go away!" The figure was directly upon me now. It seemed that the closer it got the more distorted it looked. Suddenly with a burst of adrenalin I jumped to my feet and I ran off the tracks and through the dense woods. I felt new pains popping up all over my legs and arms but I did not care. It was a matter of life or death and I had to get off those tracks. I tripped and fell time after time but nothing could stop me from pushing forward. I ran until my body just could not move anymore. I stumbled to the ground. I rolled over on my side and hugged my legs against my chest. I cried and cried and cried until I eventually passed out from all the pain.

While I was unconscious I began to envision the figure that I had seen on the tracks, only this time the image was much more vivid. As it began to come into focus it had appeared to be a bearded middle aged man that had looked like he had been working on a farm for years without ever cleaning himself. He had a pleasant looking face and didn't really seem all the scary but when I looked at what he was dragging behind him I was so shocked that I immediately woke up.

I gasped for breath and slowly tried to regain my bearings. It was now just starting to become day light and to my surprise I was lying right next to an old collapsed building. As I slowly looked around I could see where I was. I recognized the area. It was Tim's neighbor's place. Suddenly an immense feeling of dread washed over me. In my dream it was Tim! Tim was being dragged behind the man in my dream. I prayed for him to be ok and that someone would soon find me. I began to cry but the tears seemed to run dry. I just wanted this nightmare to be over.

"Stephanie!!!! Stephanie!!! Can you hear me?" Never in all my life have I ever heard a name that sounded so sweet. "Stephanie!" It was the sound of my father's voice. I cried out with every ounce of strength I had left! "Daddy I'm over here! I'm over here!" Please God let him find me. I saw him run from out of the woods and quickly to where I was. "Are you ok?!" he asked. I said, "seriously? Do I really look like I'm ok?" He laughed and then scooped me up in his arms.

Later that night I was still in the hospital being treated for my injuries. During all of the excitement of being rescued I had completely forgotten about Tim. I asked my mother what had happened to Tim. Is he ok? She said that he was fine and should be in to see me at any moment. He finally arrived and sat down beside my bed and began to cry. He said he was so glad to see that I was ok. I said of course I was ok, it is only a fractured leg here and a few scratches there. Other than that I feel like a brand new woman! He said no that wasn't what he meant. He said that after he left me, he was being chased by something in the dark. I gasped and in a low trembling voice I asked. "Did it look like a tall bearded man?" He paused for a moment and said. "yes! That is exactly what it looked like!" He then said that the weirdest part about it was, the man looked as if he was dragging something behind him!